



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT NEWS
The Monthly Electronic Newsletter of
Homeland Security and Emergency Management
N.H. Department of Safety, Richard M. Flynn, Commissioner
33 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH 03305
1-800-852-3792
newsletters@nhoem.state.nh.us

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CHRISTOPHER POPE BECOMES EM DIRECTOR – New Hampshire's state emergency management agency has a new boss and a new name. In a few months, it will have a new home as well. Christopher M. Pope was confirmed unanimously by the state Executive Council on July 19th as director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Director Pope has spent his entire career in the fire service, and has been chief of the Concord Fire Department for the past four years. He will assume his new duties in about 30 days. Kathryn E. Doult remains Assistant Director.

The state's new Emergency Operations Center is on schedule to open by October. The facility is in the final stages of construction on the grounds of the Richard M. Flynn Fire Academy off of Route 106 in Concord. It will house a state-of-the-art EOC, offices for most Emergency Management staff, a new E-911 emergency call center, State Police Communications and a new Department of Transportation Traffic Management Center.

NEW STAFF JOIN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – In addition to a new director, Homeland Security and Emergency Management has recently welcomed three new staff members. Jim Connelly is Assistant Chief of Operations; Jeremy LaPlante is a Field Representative, primarily serving communities in Cheshire and Sullivan counties and Sue Page is receptionist. Welcome aboard to all!

DEADLINE APPROACHES FOR FLOOD ASSISTANCE – Tuesday, July 25th is the deadline for flood victims in six New Hampshire counties to apply for Individual Assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Flood victims in Belknap, Carroll, Hillsborough, Merrimack, Rockingham and Strafford counties have until that date to call the Federal Emergency Management Agency to register. The number is 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 for the hearing impaired. Registration is necessary to receive any federal or state aid.

FEMA reports that more than \$7.9 million in flood aid has been approved for applicants in New Hampshire. Nearly 50 percent of those approved for aid were in Rockingham County. Another 30 percent were in Hillsborough County. Another \$10.2 million in low interest loans was approved by the U.S. Small Business Administration. FEMA says 5,365 New Hampshire flood victims have registered to receive assistance.

DISASTER RECOVERY WORKSHOP BUILDS VOLUNTEER SKILLS - Long term disaster recovery was the subject of a day-long workshop at the state Fire Academy on July 20th. The recent floods showed that there is a need for trained volunteers to help with long-term recovery operations. The workshop focused on case management and making effective use of volunteers and donations during and after disasters. Participants also heard reports on the activities of the five Operation Flood Recovery Centers dealing with the May flood and Southwest Operation Flood Recovery, which is still working on the October flood.

DISASTER TEAMS HELP GET THE MUD OUT - Over the last several weeks, families affected by the Mother's Day floods, and now, by the mold and mildew they spawned, have come to recognize the Lutheran Disaster Team and those familiar yellow shirts worn by the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief Team. The Southern Baptist Team has cleaned over 60 homes and provided several training opportunities to those who wish to volunteer their services and help them - or for those families who wanted information to safely help themselves. Within the next couple of weeks, the Southern Baptists will conduct a Train-the-Trainer session at the Dolloff Building at the Governor Gallen State Office Park, formerly the State Office Park South.

The Lutheran Disaster Relief Team is continuing to make progress and has completed more than 30 Muck-Outs, as they call them. Pastor Tim Roser will lead another group in Muck-Out on Saturday, July 29th and is planning on making a good dent in the list of homes needing assistance. This is the first time the Lutherans will be conducting Muck-Out on Saturday. They are hoping for volunteers who may have been busy during the week to help them.

Anyone interested in volunteering or attending the Train-the-Trainer session, should call N.H. Citizen Corps at 271-6098.

SAVE THE DATE – Volunteer N.H./Citizen Corps' second annual Preparedness Training Conference will be held September 16th at the Richard M. Flynn Fire Academy. Details are still being worked out, but the conference will reflect the theme of National Preparedness Month, "Get a Kit, Make a Plan, Be Informed and Get Involved." More information and registration materials will be available shortly at www.volunteernh.org.

THUNDERSTORMS BRING HAIL AND LIGHTNING – It might not have been as bad as the October and May flooding, but wild weather continued in New Hampshire in July. A series of thunderstorms moved through the southern half of the state on July 12th, bringing golf ball-sized hail to Seacoast towns and lightning that started several fires. The hail was most intense in the Exeter area, with hundreds of cars damaged at an auto dealership and in the parking lot at Exeter Hospital. Seventeenth century window panes at the historic Gilman Garrison House were shattered and the roof collapsed on one commercial building. Lightning set off fires that damaged homes in Northwood, Sutton, Wilmot and Auburn.

National Weather Service radar at Gray, Maine, briefly picked up a tornado during the storms. There was no indication that a twister had actually touched down, but a straight-line wind pattern in the Exeter area indicated a microburst had occurred there. Another storm battered Monroe on July 18th, uprooting trees and knocking out power. That storm lasted about 10 minutes.

HEAT WAVE OFFICIAL; POWER USE HITS RECORD – If anyone needed confirmation, it was hot July 17th – 19th. Not that the rest of the month wasn't, but those three days officially constituted a heat wave, which is defined as three consecutive days of temperatures over 90 degrees. Manchester hit a record 95 degrees on July 18th. That same day the New England power grid hit all-time record demand of 27,374 megawatts. The previous record was 26,885 MW set on July 27, 2005. ISO-New England attributed the high demand to extensive air conditioner use. The grid operator was able to meet the demand without seeking special conservation measures.

LIGHTNING IS AN UNDERESTIMATED DANGER – Summer thunderstorms are a possibility in New Hampshire pretty much anytime and those storms bring a life-threatening hazard that is too often not taken seriously: lightning strikes. Lightning kills an average of 66 people a year nationwide and injures another 300, according to the National Weather Service. No lightning fatalities were reported in New Hampshire last year or thus far this year, but people still need to be aware of the danger. Lightning fatalities don't get the attention that other weather-related hazards do, probably because it tends to kill one at a time. But the risk is always present, especially when people are out on the lakes or golf courses and away from sturdy buildings, which are the only safe places to be during a violent summer storm.

The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration has adopted the slogan "When lightning roars, go indoors" to reflect the need for indoor shelter during a lightning storm. NOAA is phasing out its advice to crouch down if caught outdoors in a storm because this does not provide adequate protection.

TRAINING PREPARES EMERGENCY PERSONNEL FOR HURRICANES – Seacoast emergency management directors and personnel from a number of state and federal agencies participated in a day-long hurricane training course at the state EOC on July 11th. The morning session was an introduction to hurricane meteorology and emergency management issues related to the storms, concentrating on New England hurricanes. The afternoon session was on use of the hurricane tracking program HURREVAC. The program was taught by BEM Natural Hazards Specialist Gregg Champlin and National Weather Service Meteorologists John Jensenius of the Gray, Maine, office and Matthew Belk of the Taunton, Mass., office.